

For immediate release  
October 13, 2010

Contact: Dan Williamson, Mayor's Office, 645-5300  
Cynthia Rickman, Development, 645-8795  
John Ivanic, City Council, 645-6798  
Hanna Greer, Franklin County Commissioners, 462-5848

## Housing Efforts Leading to Franklinton Revitalization Two Blighted Homes Demolished to Make Way for New Ones

Today, Mayor Michael B. Coleman, County Commissioner John O'Grady, City Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares and Franklinton neighborhood leaders were on hand as two houses were demolished on West Park Avenue to make way for new homes. The group also toured homes in various stages of rehabilitation. The homes are being built and revitalized with funds from a more than \$22 million award from the first round of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). NSP monies are being used in Columbus neighborhoods hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis.

"Through our Home Again program and federal funding, we continue to replace foreclosed and abandoned properties with beautiful new homes," Mayor Coleman said. "In Franklinton our efforts are being rewarded with new residents coming to our oldest neighborhood."

A new home will be built at 38-40 West Park by the Franklinton Development Association in partnership with in partnership with Cleveland-based NRP Group. The project, called Boulevard Homes, includes construction and rehabilitation of 40 single-family homes in Franklinton. Columbus has committed \$521,050 in NSP funds to the effort. The city is also partnering with Franklinton Development Association to develop seven rental units in the neighborhood.

"Home ownership is essential to the redevelopment of many areas of Columbus," said Councilmember Tavares, chair of the Housing Committee. "When we have an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing, we begin to see the transformation of not just blocks, but entire neighborhoods."

Franklin County received \$5 million in NSP funds and has partnered with the City to create the AWARE manual for green standards and also launched a website, "Come Home Central Ohio" to help in the effort to sell the homes.

"Currently, over 57 percent of mortgages held by residents considered to be in lower income brackets are unaffordable," Commissioner O'Grady said. "We cannot stand idly by as energy and other utility costs make owning a home even less affordable. We're incorporating the AWARE Manual Standards in all of our housing projects. The AWARE features will help keep energy costs low, contributing to the long-term affordability of the home."

Four years ago Mayor Coleman kicked off the city's Home Again Program in Franklinton; four properties on West Park were rehabbed through Home Again. The Ohio Housing Financing Agency is another partner in the city's revitalization efforts. Upon completion of all of the projects, 11 West Park properties, including four rehabs and seven new constructions, will be impacted by NSP.

"Franklinton has had some rough years," said Jim Sweeney, executive director of the Franklinton Development Association. "But when you have visionary leaders like Mayor Coleman who can pull resources together in a focused way, you can begin to make improvements block by block."